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ABSTRACT

To assist Cree-speaking native Canadian students in English language acquisition, the Mighty Moose Reading Project was initiated with a threefold aim: to develop program materials designed specifically as supplementary beginning reading materials for native students; to determine the effectiveness of the materials in improving reading skills, oral language skills, and self-concept of students; and to improve teacher competency. A group of 610 second and third grade students were studied using ten cartoon adventure stories about a magical moose presented on a color filmstrip accompanied by Cree and English language audio cassettes. Test results indicated that the materials improved neither expressive vocabulary nor reading achievement, although subjective reports from teachers indicated student improvement in oral language, writing skills, self-concept, reading interest, and creative writing ability, and success with low-achieving students. It is suggested that the limited duration and intensity of exposure to the program rather than serious program defects may be responsible for the negative test results. (Appendixes present a teacher questionnaire and a sample booklet and teacher guide.) (DF)

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REPORT OF THE

MIGHTY MOOSE READING PROJECT

1977-1978

NORTHLAND SCHOOL DIVISION
Mr. Don Weaver, Superintendent

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Dr. Frank Finney

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PREFACE

The availability of relevant materials and strategies for teaching children how to speak and read English is probably the most important single resource need in native education today. There is a paucity of materials available to Alberta teachers designed exclusively for the use of children who are culturally and linguistically different. These materials which reflect the cultural environment and experiences of students are an integral part of the basic scholastic tools essential to the pursuit of learning.[1]

1. Language Policy in Indian Education. A Research Report. The Northern Development Group. April, 1975. Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project could not have been successfully completed without the advice and help of many different people. Teachers and administrators in Northland School Division are particularly thanked for their willingness to use the project materials and to provide the large amount of data from the questionnaires and student tests. We trust that both teachers and students in the project have benefited.

The support and encouragement offered by Mr. Don Weaver, Superintendent of Schools, Northland School Division, and his staff, particularly Mr. Ed Whitenett, Mr. Frank Blonke, and Mrs. Mary McNeil, is heartfully acknowledged.

Mrs. Mary Gaucher of Paddle Prairie and Mrs. Clara Yellowknee of Wabasca, trustees appointed to provide guidance as part of the steering committee, offered assistance and advice which represented a substantial contribution at crucial stages of the design and development of the project.

Mrs. Lois Connell, who illustrated the materials and Mr. Bob Silverthorne, Director of Muskwachees Cultural College, Hobbema, who produced the audio-cassettes and filmstrips, are thanked for their creative energies and talents.

Finally, acknowledgements and thanks are extended to colleagues in the Planning and Research Branch of Alberta Education; Dr. H. Sherk, Dr. W. Eddy, and Dr. C. Rhodes. Their assistance and advice represented a significant contribution to the project.

To all of the above and to others not mentioned who contributed to the success of the project, I express appreciation.

Frank Finney,
Summer 1978.

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CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND

Origin of the Project

The recently completed "Examination of Educational Policy in Canada" by The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1976) pointed out, through specific recommendations, some major problems facing educators in Canada today. High priority was placed on the particular problem of educating underprivileged groups of students in this country.

The largest and fastest growing group of underprivileged students in Alberta today is unquestionably our native students who face some special problems, one of which is the paucity of relevant materials for students who are culturally, linguistically and experientially different.

Success in school is predicated on competence in the language of instruction and the ability to read. Just as we need a separate philosophy for native education, so too we need distinct materials for teaching our native students.

A proposal to evaluate a reading program, appropriate and relevant for native students in Alberta was submitted to the Planning and Research Branch of Alberta Education by the Learning Assistance Centre in May 1976. At a joint meeting between officials of Alberta Education and Northland School Division, the proposed 'Mighty Moose' reading project was discussed and the request granted, with the provision that the proposal and the project management originate with Northland School Division. A steering committee including representatives of Northland School Division and Alberta Education was organized and Dr. Frank Finney assigned to coordinate the project.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was threefold. First, to develop program materials specifically designed as supplementary, beginning reading materials for native students. Second, to determine if these materials effectively contributed to the curriculum and improved reading skills, oral language skills and the self-concept of primary grade native students. Another purpose of the study was to improve teacher competency in reading instruction through professional in-service instruction and the use of a teacher guidebook for the reading materials.

CHAPTER II

DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

Hypotheses

This study examined two hypotheses. It was hypothesized that there would be no difference in scores on (1) the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and (2) the Mulitple Choice Cloze Test of Reading, between primary students in Northland School Division, Alberta, who participated in a supplementary language experience reading program 'Mighty Moose Reading' during the 1977-78 school year and primary grade students of the same school division who did not utilize the supplementary language experience program 'Mighty Moose Reading'. A statistical significance of .05 or less was the level selected for rejection of a null hypotheses.

Definition of Terms

Language Experience

An approach to teaching reading based on the theory that reading is the interpretation of symbols that arouse meaningful responses based on the individual experiences of the student. Reading is a by-product of the child's thinking and oral expression. The student's language is the basis of reading materials. The language experience approach to reading involves all aspects of communication, listening, writing, speaking and reading. It is especially conducive to the effective utilization of teacher aides.

Primary Students

Primary students are those in their second or third year of school.

Limitations

This project involved only those students in the second and third grades in Northland School Division, Alberta, during part of the 1977-78 school year. Measurement of reading was limited to scores on a group standardized test. Facility in receptive English was measured by a standardized test and English language-level by subjective teacher assessment. The 'When Do I Smile' self-concept instrument, proposed as a measure of student self-concept was not utilized for the project. Norms had not been established.

The content validity of the California Reading Test and the Gates-Maginitie Reading Test was questioned in light of recent psycholinguistic findings regarding the process of reading. The Multiple Choice Cloze Test was utilized as a measure of reading comprehension.

As a result of the vast geographical distances involved and multitudinal variables existing within the schools, assessment of teacher implementation of the program was limited to two or three visits per teacher by facilitators and the project coordinator. Proposed utilization of behavior checklists, interaction analysis and narrative recording to monitor the implementation strategies of teachers, in a manner that would satisfy the rigorous research design requirements of a traditional hypothico-deductive plan were impossible.

Population

The students involved in this project were second and third grade students in Northland School Division, Alberta, during the 1977-78 school year. Half of the classes were randomly assigned to the experimental group and the other half to the control group. The total population was 610 students with a mean age of 8.4 years in thirty-five classes.

CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES

Preparation of Materials

The development of relevant and supplementary materials for native students was one important purpose of this project. The development involved two separate steps: (1) the design of the materials, and (2) the design of component materials.

Design of the Materials

The design of the project materials was based on five overall basic assumptions or general principles related to learning to read in a second language.

1. Language, reading and thinking are interdependent. Beginning reading is faciiitated by materials which closely approximate the language and experiences of the child.

2. The closer the match between the language spoken by the child and the materials to be read, the easier it is to read.

3. Creative writing activities help students understand the important details in written language and complement a reading program.

4. Children learn new language best and learn how to read if they are motivated, interested and feel the need and purpose for communication.

5. Children learn to read when the reading material is associated with something that they already know or with something they can see or feel.

Component Materials

The 'Mighty Moose' program materials consisted of ten adventure stories about a magical, mighty moose and his two nature friends. Each story was recorded in Cree and English on a cassette tape and was accompanied

by a colour filmstrip.

1. Mighty Moose Goes to School
2. Mighty Moose Goes Fishing
3. Mighty Moose Goes Camping
4. Mighty Moose Goes Canoeing
5. Magical Mighty Moose
6. Mighty Moose Plays Hockey
7. Danger in the Bush
8. Cross Country Ski Adventure
9. Mighty Moose Goes Snowmobiling
10. Mighty Moose Helps Santa

The ten stories were illustrated in blank booklets for student use and a teacher "Guidebook" described the program use and teaching strategies.

To facilitate data collection and coordination of the project, a meeting was arranged on August 30, 1977 to explain the project to all school principals. As a result of this meeting, Mrs. Mary McNeil, teacher-facilitator with the central office of Northland School Division was appointed as liaison between the teachers and the project coordinator. Two organizational meetings with Northland administration personnel were held in September and October prior to the workshops with participating teachers to organize data collection.

Data Collection

The study was conducted during the 1977-78 school year with all teachers of second and third grade students in Northland School Division. Classes were randomly assigned to experimental or control groups.

Pre-treatment Data

In order to establish initial comparability, all second and third grade students involved in the project were pre-tested with the Peabody

Picture Vocabulary Test and the Dillon Language Scale between November 1st to November 10th, 1977. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test measures hearing vocabulary. The Dillon Language Scale measures the English performance level of Indian children.

Treatment

All teachers in the experimental and control groups received in-service training during the Educational Opportunities Fund workshop held in Edmonton during November, 1977. The experimental group attended workshops on assessment procedures and utilization of the 'Mighty Moose' reading program. The control group attended workshops on assessment procedures only.

The 'Mighty Moose' program was utilized as a supplementary reading program in all experimental classes between November 1, 1977 and January 24, 1978. The project coordinator, facilitators and Northland School Division central office personnel visited all the project schools to assess implmentation and process adherence. Plans were made to forward the completed student stories to the school division central office in Peace River for typing. A new, typed story-booklet was returned to the students using the 'Mighty Moose' materials. A typist was hired according to the project proposal. However, it soon became evident after the first and second story booklets, that the students' writings were becoming more and more comprehensive. The typing staff at Northland School Division central office together with the support staff at Alberta Education could not keep abreast of the students' writings. Consequently, the project coordinator decided to have the first five of the ten booklets typed. Individual schools arranged for the typing or printing, by the teacher, for the remaining five booklets.

Post-treatment Data

Following the different treatments the two groups of project teachers attended in-service sessions in Edmonton on January 31st and February 1st, 1978. The Multiple Choice Cloze Test was adopted as a valid and relevant reading comprehension test. It was adapted so that it could be used by those students familiar with the orthography of DISTAR Reading.

The Multiple Choice Cloze was administered to grade 2 and 3 students from February 6th to February 15th, 1978.

At the end of the project, all teachers of the control and experimental groups were asked to complete a questionnaire and to forward suggestions and comments regarding the project. Teacher evaluation of the project and suggestions for improvement are discussed in Chaper IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

To establish initial comparability of the students participating in the project, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Dillon Language Scale were administered.

TABLE 1 shows the difference in the mean scores from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

TABLE 2 shows the difference in the mean scores from the Dillon Language Scale.

TABLE 1

PRE-TREATMENT

DIFFERENCE IN MEAN SCORES FROM THE P.P.V.T.

OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

TEST	CONTROL		EXPERIMENTAL		DIFFERENCE
	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	
P.P.V.T.	265	5.73 M.A.	270	5.32 M.A.	0.41*

M.A. - Mental Age in years and months.
* not significant.

TABLE 2

PRE-TREATMENT

DIFFERENCE IN MEAN SCORES FROM THE DILLON LANGUAGE SCALE

OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

TEST	CONTROL		EXPERIMENTAL		DIFFERENCE
	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	
DILLON	277	4.72 yrs.	279	3.94 yrs.	0.78*

* not significant.

It is apparent from Tables 1 and 2 that no difference in expressive vocabulary and language ability existed between the control and experimental groups prior to the project.

One part of this project was to determine the effect of the 'Mighty Moose' reading materials on the reading ability and expressive vocabulary levels of primary level native students. This developed two hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

The hypothesis, "there is no difference in scores on the Multiple Choice Cloze Test between primary grade students who utilized a supplementary reading program and primary grade students who have not utilized the supplementary reading program", was analyzed by comparison of the mean scores on the Multiple Choice Cloze Reading Test for the experimental and control groups. Fisher's *t* test for the significance of the difference between means for independent samples was used to compare the mean scores.

Table 3 shows the difference in the mean scores for the Multiple Choice Cloze Reading Test.

TABLE 3

POST TREATMENT

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES FOR READING ABILITY

OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

TEST	CONTROL		EXPERIMENTAL		DIFFERENCE
	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	
N.C.C.	280	2.72 yrs.	310	2.81 yrs.	0.09*

* not significant.

It is evident from Table 3 that there were no differences in the reading ability between the students who utilized the 'Mighty Moose' reading program and students who did not use this program.

Hypothesis 2

The Hypothesis "there is no difference in scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test between primary grade students who have utilized a supplementary reading program and primary grade students who have not utilized the supplementary reading program", was analyzed by comparison of the mean scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test for the experimental and control groups. Fisher's *t* test for the significance of the difference between means for independent samples was used to compare the mean scores.

Table 4 shows the difference in the mean scores for the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

TABLE 4

POST TREATMENT

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES FOR THE P.P.V.T.

OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

TEST	CONTROL		EXPERIMENTAL		DIFFERENCE
	N	MEAN	N	MEAN	
P.P.V.T.	280	5.73	291	6.12	0.39*

* not significant

It is evident from Table 4 that there were no differences in the receptive vocabulary ability between the students who utilized the 'Mighty Moose' reading program and students who did not use this program.

When the data related to the two hypotheses under study was analyzed, significant evidence was presented that students in the project, both 'Mighty Moose' and the control groups, made very little increase in expressive vocabulary and reading achievement. The limited duration and intensity of the project probably accounted for this result. Subjective

assessments of the project, including the materials and benefit to students, as assessed by teacher questionnaires were highly supportive.

The two in-service sessions were evaluated through administrative personnel from Northland School Division who summarized teacher involvement as excellent.

Effect of In-service on Teacher Competency

A second part of this project involved the improvement of teacher competency in reading instruction through professional in-service and a guidebook. Feedback from teachers concerning aspects of the in-service and project were obtained anonymously through a questionnaire and discussions with facilitators who monitored the program implementation.

Teacher Questionnaire

The most important variable affecting a reading program is the classroom teacher. Teacher evaluation of the 'Mighty Moose' reading project was assessed through an open-ended questionnaire sent to all participating teachers who used the supplementary program. The number of teachers was small (18), and the rate of return was one hundred percent. A copy of the questionnaire is enclosed in Appendix A. Evaluation of in-service sessions was undertaken through open-ended, anonymous written evaluation immediately following the in-service sessions.

General Reaction to the Questionnaire

The general theme of the teachers' responses was unequivocal support and enthusiasm for the program. Points made included the following:

- The students looked forward to 'Mighty Moose' time.
- My students made a significant gain in initiative.
- A dramatic change in self-confidence and participation.
- I wish it were longer.
- Certainly contributed to improvement in self-concept and the childrens' language.

- Lots of improvement in grammar and creative story writing ability.
- I would like to see some "open-ended" stories.
- They liked the stories and made a lot of progress in story writing.
- It increased their ability to write and read stories on their own.
- I found the program very good and the children seemed to make a lot of progress.
- Since using the 'Mighty Moose' materials the children have taken a greater interest in reading books.
- Many of my students are using more English when they talk.
- The children take more pride in their writing of a story and they write complete stories.
- 'Mighty Moose' is an excellent motivator for encouraging creative story writing.
- It enabled the students to better understand the fundamentals of writing.
- The greatest change was in the lower students who started off describing the pictures and ended up writing real stories.
- All the students improved their writing skills.
- 'Mighty Moose' gave the students more interest in reading because they now know it's people (like them) who write books.
- My students developed self-confidence in creative writing skills, they were far more motivated to read library books and they developed motive and independent reading and work habits.
- It was the combination of methods, materials and activities which made the project so very successful.
- I found the program itself very effective in terms of creative oral expression, stimulation, spelling, and enjoyment.
- Very much a worthwhile program for developing oral and written English. The children really enjoyed it.
- The 'Mighty Moose' program was very good. My class and I enjoyed it.
- My low achievers showed better progress than my top students. They progressed from one word to "almost" sentences.
- Extremely good for development of oral language.

- The kids loved the stories. Such a refreshing change from Tom, Betty and Co.
- I hope it can continue. They really enjoyed the stories.

Reaction to Specific Items

Three questions related to specific items. Item 2 requested teacher response regarding most-successful techniques, methods, materials or activities. Most respondents commented on the story and language 'structure' which made writing easier, the typing of booklets and the audio-visual presentation. Other responses included the 'discussion' or re-telling of the story by the children, story chart writing, dramatizations, word banks, the Cree tapes and the bold booklet illustrations.

Item 3 asked for the least successful methods, activities, materials and techniques. The following points were included: Having to send the booklets away for typing interfered with follow-up and supplementary work; The taped stories were too short; They didn't allow the students enough time to study the picture; The 'My Own Words' lists were not useful; After a while grade three students preferred to write an individual rather than a group story; Lined booklets would help.

Item 4 asked for teachers to comment on their involvement with parents, administrative personnel, teacher aides and colleagues. This varied from complete involvement to no involvement for different teachers. There seemed to be cooperation and interest from professional colleagues, extensive and much valued work by teacher aides and little interest from parents.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is generally recognized that very few instructional materials have been developed that help native students to learn how to read, write and speak.

It was the purpose of the project (1) to develop supplementary, beginning reading materials for Cree speaking students, (2) to determine the effectiveness of these materials in the improvement of reading and language skills and (3) to improve teacher competency in reading instruction through professional in-service and a program guidebook.

The first element of the project, the development of reading materials involved two separate steps: the design of the materials and the design of component materials themselves. The design was based on basic assumptions related to learning to read in a second language and resulted in a language experience type of program. The component materials consisted of ten adventure stories about a magical, mighty moose in blank comic-book format. Each story was accompanied by a cassette tape and colour filmstrip. See Appendix B for booklet sample and the program guidebook.

Second and third grade students were randomly divided into two groups - experimental and control. The experimental groups used the 'Mighty Moose' materials for the duration of the project, the control group did not. Initial comparability was established through pre-testing with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Dillon Language Scale. Reading achievement was assessed through the Multiple Choice Cloze Test

and teachers in the experimental groups completed a questionnaire.

Conclusions

Analysis of the data pertaining to the two hypotheses tested resulted in their acceptance at the .01 level of confidence. Therefore, it was concluded that under the limitations of the present study (1) the 'Mighty Moose' materials do not improve expressive vocabulary and (2) reading achievement is not significantly affected.

The teacher questionnaire indicated unequivocal support for the program. In addition to several personal letters from teachers, commenting on professional development growth and asking if more stories were available, several teachers asked to use it again during the 1978-79 school year. Subjective judgement by teachers indicated student improvement in oral language, including vocabulary and expression; writing skills, self-concept and reading interest. Low achieving students seemed to make excellent improvement and teachers felt the program improved the creative writing abilities of all their students. Teachers indicated personal professional growth, especially in the area of language experience teaching strategies. The limited duration and intensity of the treatment, rather than inadequacies of the program, may have caused the non-significant findings. Pupils may not have been exposed sufficiently to produce measurable results.

Implications

Experience with the study suggests the practicability and acceptance of relevant supplementary materials which reflect the cultural and linguistically different environment and experiences of native children as part of the tools essential to the pursuit of learning.

The 'Mighty Moose' program can be an excellent complement to a reading program, especially when comprehension skills and reading enjoyment are a major objective. The program can also be used to develop creative writing skills and seems to be particularly successful with reluctant and slow learners.

The written comments of teachers on the questionnaire indicated certain areas for revision. Most teachers felt that the time exposure per filmstrip frames should be extended and some filmstrips re-photographed. Consequent to a meeting at Muskwachees College, R. Silverthorne and colleagues revised the cassettes and re-photographed the filmstrips. (The revised audio-visual component could increase the effectivenss of the program.) Several teachers suggested using lined booklets to facilitate students' writing and revisions to the Multiple Choice Cloze Test.

Recommendations

The 'Mighty Moose' program has potential for use as a supplementary beginning reading program to help avoid the tendency toward over-dependence on a single instruction method or material to teach reading.

Relationships among the variables such as student age, sex, achievement, teacher experience and program implementation level require further investigation. It is possible that significant benefits would result from a study which controlled the variables, or a combination of the variables related to students and teachers, especially if the program implementation was extended over two or three years. Lengthening the project over two or three years would provide the duration and intensity likely to produce measurable results.

Valuable additions to this study would be to replicate it to assess the effect on creative writing and the effect on reading achievement and interest when used to supplement DISTAR.

The booklets, the audio-visual component and the Multiple Choice Cloze Test could all be revised.

The writer views the 'Mighty Moose' materials as an effective supplementary, beginning reading program for increasing students' performance and interest in reading, self-concept and writing. The project has added an important resource to native education.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER EVALUATION OF THE MIGHTY MOOSE PROGRAM

1. Describe briefly the most significant changes in the students participating in the Mighty Moose Program. These changes may include such areas of change as achievement, self-concept, participation in classroom activities, behavior in school, school adjustment, attitude toward reading or school, sociometrics, writing etc

2. Describe the methods, materials, techniques, or activities that were most successful in achieving the objectives of the Mighty Moose Program. Explain why they were successful.

3. Describe the methods, procedures, materials, or activities that were least successful in achieving the objectives of the Mighty Moose Program. Explain why they were not successful.

4. Briefly comment on your involvement with:

   Parents -

   School Administration -

   Teacher Aides -

   Colleagues -

5. Give your conclusions in terms of the overall effectiveness of the program and indicate what you would do differently to improve the use of the Mighty Moose Program as a supplementary reading or language development program.

6. Describe outstanding anecdotes of a human interest nature concerning the impact of the Mighty Moose Program on a particular student(s).

NAME _____ SCHOOL _____

(complete anonymously if you wish and attach separate sheets if space provided is insufficient)

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE BOOKLET

290
START

33

34

52
36

FINISH
36

MIGHTY MOOSE READING

FRANK FINNEY

LOIS CONNELL - ILLUSTRATOR

"What a dangerous activity reading is, teaching is. All this plastering on of foreign stuff. Why plaster on at all when there's so much inside already? So much locked in? If only I could get it out and use it as working material. And not draw it out either. If I had a light enough touch it would come out under its own volcanic power..."

Sylvia Ashton Warner

TEACHER'S GUIDEBOOK

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What is 'MM'? 2

Instructional Insights 3

Leading a Lesson 5

Supplementary Strategies 10

Story Outlines 13

WHAT IS 'MM'?

'MM' is a program specifically aimed at improving children's language, beginning reading and self-concept development through the creation and utilization of student-authored reading materials. A series of wordless picture books about a magical, mysterious and monsterous moose provide the motivation to learn to read - the eventual objective of the program.

Language - listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills are interrelated through the already existing language of the child and the language model - the teacher.

Reading - is viewed as one language activity and not fragmented, isolated or separated. All language skills are correlated with the art of reading. For example:

What I listen to helps me to speak;
What I learn to speak helps me to write;
What I write I can read.

Using reading material which closely approximates the child's spoken language and assisted reading strategies facilitate the transfer from spoken to printed signals.

Self-Concept - development, particularly the positive qualities a student attributes to his ability to read, are promoted through use of the child's language; small, flexible groups; affective teaching and assisted reading strategies.

INSTRUCTIONAL INSIGHTS

The instructional strategy follows the process of listening, speaking, writing and reading. Let us follow this order in discussing development of the reading material which of course is the ultimate goal.

The teacher first tells the story to the students in simple outline form. Almost all children are enthusiastic about listening to a story. Tapes (Cree/English) of each adventure may be used.

Since this is the first experience children will have with the materials it is important to establish a friendly, warm and accepting climate.

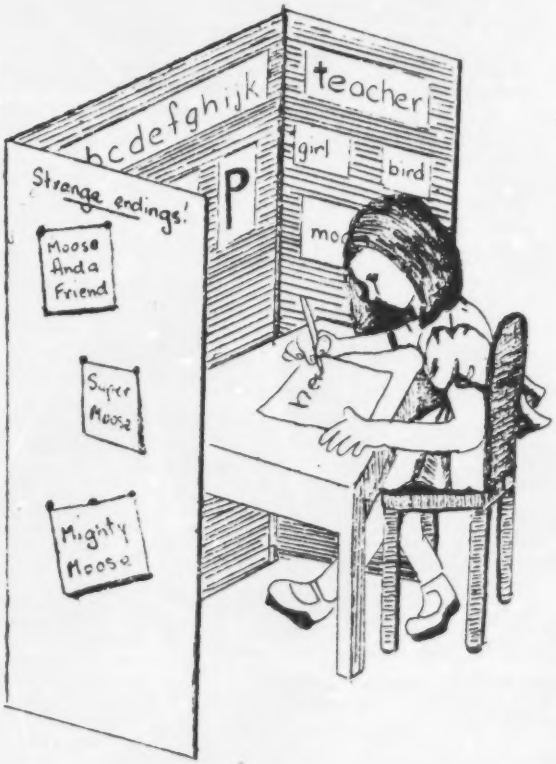
The children are then invited to regenerate the story to the teacher.

For small children, begin by getting a title for the story or say "What would you like to call your story?" Older students may be divided into smaller discussion groups to help expand their verbal and cognitive repertory by both receiving and expressing language. Such groups usually contibute to a more thoughtful story and provide opportunity for active participation. Socialization is a catalyst for language acquisition.

Write down the story on a language chart, a blank 'MM' booklet or the chalk board.

Have the children as close to you as possible so that the formation of letters and the story can be clearly seen.

Individually or in groups, the children write their own 'MM' story at writing stations or in special story boxes.



A story box can be cardboard, cut out to fit each desk, or a large box with a small table set up with writing materials.

Young children can select key words or phrases from the regenerated story and write them on the page entitled "My Own Words." These act as a guide as children work independently. For children who say I don't know what to write let them review the pictures and lead them to discuss and develop the story. Here are some suggested questions:

a. Who are these people?

b. What is s/he saying?

c. What is happening?

Children who cannot write can record their story on a cassette tape or see it written down by the teacher's aide.

The self-authored stories provide both teachers and students with a source of highly motivating material.

LEADING A LESSON

Here are some suggestions for teaching strategies. Not the way, but what seems to be an appropriate way. You may find alternative and additional ways depending on your teaching style and your students.

TO FACILITATE LISTENING*
SPEAKING
WRITING
READING

Tell the story rather than read it. The story style should be simple and direct. Move the story along clearly, quickly and informally. The fewer the roadblocks of lengthy descriptions or digression for philosophy the better. Emphasize the plot; don't try to paint too many word pictures; use some dialogue; use the present tense; and dramatize.

An important, though often overlooked, aid to help young children remember a story and to eventually read it is to telegraph meaning through repetitive sequence. Over-emphasize repetition for small children to help keep the story simple and as a cue for language regeneration and reading.

See how repetitive sequence was used by students to regenerate this story.

mickey the moose goes to school.
mickey the moose is brushing his teeth.
mickey the moose greets the teacher.
mickey the moose is reading a story called
honk the moose.
the teacher and kids like mickey the moose.

LISTENING
TO DEVELOP SPEAKING*
WRITING
READING

There are four over-all basic assumptions or general principles of learning on which 'MM' is based.

1. Language, reading and thinking are interdependent.

   Beginning reading is facilitated by materials which closely approximate the language and experiences of the child.

The other three principles are directly related to language development. Understanding and incorporation of these principles will be crucial to the success you have. Read them carefully and thoughtfully.

2. Children learn new language best if they feel the need for verbal communication.

   This implies creating a situation which is interesting enough to stimulate talk. Additionally, it means giving the child opportunity to express his thoughts. Encourage each student to talk about any idea at any time. Accept and respect his/her contributions, rather than correct grammar, slang, or dialect.

3. Children learn new language best when it is associated with something that they already know or with something they can see or feel.

This principle is self-explanatory. Make use of concrete experience in relation to language whenever possible.

We instinctively show a baby a kitten when we repeat "kitty" but often forget that the six-year old needs to visually experience terms such as "above" or "under."

4. Children will learn new language best when it is heard and used often.

The importance of your role as teacher in modeling language cannot be over-emphasized. Children develop and test their notions about the meanings of words and the structure of sentences chiefly through interaction with more verbally mature speakers. Whenever possible, small group instruction will assure ample opportunity for interactive dialogue.

You can help as a model in this dialogue to develop children's language by:

a. Extending a word to a phrase or sentence.

Teacher: "What is happening?"

Student: "Scared."

Teacher: "Yes, the children are scared."

b. Flexing the syntax or word order.

Student: "It fun to play on teeter-totter."

Teacher: "Playing on the teeter-totter is fun."

c. Refining meaning or providing more descriptive words.

Student: "Dog is crying."

Teacher: "Yes, the dog is crying -- he is howling."

LISTENING
SPEAKING
TO AID WRITING*
READING

Write down the regenerated stories in 'groups of meaning' as the children say them. Avoid saying each individual word as it is written down. Words do not simply follow one another in unrelated separateness. Reading is putting meaning to many funny squiggles and lines not individual letters or words. Meaning is gained from word clusters.

Read the following story in 'normal style,'

Mickey the Moose is brushing his teeth and washing his face. He is getting ready to go to school for the first time. Bobby the bird is waiting for him. He is going to go to school too.

and written down in 'groups of meaning.'

mickey the moose
is brushing his teeth
and washing his face.
he is getting ready to go to school
for the first time.
bobby the bird is waiting for him.
he is going to go to school too.

See how the word clusters aid meaning???

The beginning stories should have no capital letters other than captial I, but should use full stops at the end of sentences.

mike the moose has some skates.
I will play hockey he says.
one shoots
two shoots
no one can score a goal.

Captial letters for the beginning of sentences and for proper nouns together with speech marks can be introduced when you feel they will be a worthwhile contribution and not confusing.

Punctuation and print can attract or dare a child to read; besides, it's a lot of fun. Be creative with the writing-down process.

See how the following 'invites' you to read.

LISTENING
SPEAKING
WRITING
TO PROMOTE READING*

One important, though often overlooked, aspect of beginning reading is enjoyment of stories. Do not try to use the procedures from a more formal reading program at this stage of reading. Don't digress from the story to point out similar beginning or ending sounds or similarities and difference between letter and word forms. The payoff for the child is the story. This is a motivating force necessary to sustain the child when he begins to read for himself.

Three simple strategies are suggested for assisting children to read:

1. READING ALONG

Read the story when you have written it down. Read smoothly and expressively but try to point to each word as you are reading it. Avoid word by word reading. Invite the children to read along with you as you sweep your hand from left to right. Rereading is important. Children need to read along with the teacher several times to learn the words, phrases and the story. Ask for volunteers to read words or phrases. Invite children to find words that are repeated in the story or to tell their favourite word and find it in the story. Favourite words can be written on the back page of an 'MM' booklet or on an index card. This can be the beginning of a student's word bank - a collection of words placed into categories: "Words I Know" and "Words I Am Learning." For some students a third bank - "Words I Would Like To Know" can be added. Small boxes or envelopes can be used to store word cards.

2. READING OVER

Children will vary in the amount of time spent in "Reading Over" the story. Moving to independence in reading is a vital process and individual differences must be respected to ensure success. Children generally want to read for themselves and it is important that they avoid frustration and a sense of failure.

Invite the child to "Read Over" his own story, offering to help. The teacher reads most of the words but "Reads Over" those s/he feels that the child knows.

In practice, the teacher reads along with the student(s), holding back when s/he comes to a word or phrase not known. This technique will become sophisticated as you learn which words and phrases the students know. Confidence and enjoyment of reading are important aspects of the 'MM' program and reinforcements during this stage can greatly enhance the positive qualities a child attributes to his ability to read.

If a child appears frustrated, the story will have little meaning. If this is the case, reread the story and "Read Along." (A tape cassette is useful.)

3. READING IN

The child moves to independence when s/he asks to say the words alone. At this stage the teacher assists the child to read by "Reading In" the few words or phrases not known. Appropriate reinforcements and encouragement together with the story payoff will ensure success experiences and eventual independence in reading.

SUPPLEMENTARY STRATEGIES

A variety of reading methods and materials have been developed in recent years but none of them have been shown to be exclusively superior. It is doubtful that materials or method alone are the main factors in teaching success. Most successful teachers of reading are good without knowing why -- they are good intuitively. However, some teacher behaviors such as enthusiasm, insight into individual differences, positive reinforcement, deviation from the 'prescribed' reading program, diagnostic-prescriptive teaching, and recognition of non-responders can readily be identified in teachers who promote reading success.

Most teachers are eclectic -- the one method teacher probably promotes more reading problems than anything else and is an anachronism the public can ill afford to support.

With a bit of over-simplification we can suggest supplementing any 'sight' approach with some 'phonics,' any linguistic approach with some high utility words, and so forth -- but don't be 'brainless' and sell your students only one product.

Some supplementary strategies for beginning reading instruction, to complement the 'MM' program, by developing important reading skills, include:

1. Spoken context: Practice in using context to figure out several words that would make sense where the teacher has omitted a word.

   For example:

   Teacher: "Moose got dressed, he put on his _____."

   Student: "Clothes, coat, pants, vest."

2. Initial consonant sounds: Associating the initial sounds in words with the letters which represent them.

   For example: (Complete activity funsheets by cutting out the pictures and pasting them in the appropriate column.)

m	L

3. Letter names: Using matching, identifying and naming games to teach recognition of upper and lower case letters.

   For example:

   Prepare a deck of cards with all 26 letters printed in lower case on one side, upper case on the other. Set aside all cards mastered. Take the unknown letters and teach one at a time, not necessarily in alphabetical order.

Say to the student, "This is z. Say it. What is this letter?" Teach easily confused letters such as b and d, m and n, p and q, and others at separate times.

Use the alphabet cards, three at a time. Say to the student as you point to one unknown letter, "This is t. Point to the letter t. What is this?"

An alphabet train around the room or alphabet strips should be available together with manipulative alphabet letters for reference purposes.

Games such as adding leaves to an alphabet-tree or climbing the ABC ladder can be devised.

'ABC' Concentration can be played by preparing pairs of cards for five different letters. Mix the ten cards, and turn them upside down. Students take turns to turn over a card, name it, and match it with its duplicate.

Use the sutdent's names to help teach letter names. For example, place some names on the chalkboard and say, "How many of our names have a letter f in them?" Invite a student to underline the letter f in any name and say it as s/he does so.

4. Context and initial consonant sounds: Practice in using context and initial consonant sound clues to figure out words.

For example:

> Moose wants to cut a board in half. He needs a tool that begins with the same sound as sit and sang. He needs a _____.

5. Cloze Procedure Application: Cloze-type material can be used in a variety of ways to focus on different aspects of reading instruction.

Some examples include:

1. Prepare multiple cloze passages, deleting lexical items (nouns, verbs, adjectives) to focus instruction on the syntactic constraints of the language.

For example:

Mighty Moose lifted the ___(1)___ over the bridge.

(1) big
bus
girl

2. Prepare cloze passages deleting items for which students must supply synonyms to focus instruction on vocabulary (meaning) development.

For example:

The dog is not _____ of the hunters.

afraid, frightened, scared

3. Prepare cloze passages in which items containing selected phoneme-grapheme correspondences are deleted.

For example: All words deleted contain the short 'a' vowel sound.

The 'MM' booklets can be used for a variety of purposes by all students at any grade level.

Young children like to look at pictures and tell what is happening. The booklets can be used to stimulate language development in young children who need experience in oral expression. The shy youngster who seemingly has nothing to talk about, or the child with a limited background whose experience resources are limited, can interpret and describe the action in one of the booklets.

When story action is visually presented, young children can discover the excitement of sequence and the resolution of a conflict for themselves. This will motivate and encourage them to read.

Besides providing oral language experiences, MM booklets can also be used as a stimulus for creative writing.

Some children have difficulty in writing a story. Often, two or three short sentences reflect their struggles and frustration. For these children, the teacher might suggest that they write a story of their own for one of the MM booklets. Because the story plot is visually represented children often write surprisingly long stories and so develop the skills of story writing.

Different forms of writing can be encouraged such as:

- poetry
- secret code
- another language
- decorative print

A story can be rewritten in dialogue for a play. Have the students dramatize their favorite MM story using simple or elaborate

props, costumes and makeup.

The blank comics are useful to teach dialogue. Allow students to draw balloons and write the words spoken by characters inside the balloons. From this it is an easy and natural step to using quotation marks.

Transpose the language
- singular to plural
- masculine to feminine
- present tense to past
- first person to third person

Make a classroom 'MM' reading center for
- completed books
- books with funny endings
- books with strange endings
- same page-different interpretation section

Draw extra pictures in an 'MM' booklet.

Dictate the story on a cassette. (These can be used as read-alongs by other children.)

Cut out the pictures and make a frieze-story across a bulletin board.

Cut out the illustrations and paste some onto blank paper to invent a different story or use them as puppets on the overhead projector.

STORY OUTLINES

The audio-scripts for each booklet have been written down for the teacher's information NOT for convenience. Remember, you must tell the story rather than read it. Make the story telling part of your own teaching style, in a way you feel most comfortable and according to your knowledge of the students.

Mighty Moose Goes to School

Mighty Moose is getting ready to go to school.

His friend the bird will go with him.

The teacher says hello. The children are frightened.

The children listen to Mighty Moose. He does not frighten them now.

Mighty Moose reads a story to the children.

He is learning to paint.

He is learning to write.

At recess time the children and Mighty Moose play on the teeter-totter. The teacher shouts, "Hold on tight."

Mighty Moose Goes Fishing

Mighty Moose is getting ready to go fishing.

He forgets his lunch.

The Bird tries to tell Mighty Moose about the lunch. He is too busy getting ready to catch fish.

The fishing line is caught on a tree. The bird helps to free the hook.

Mighty Moose tries again. This time the line gets caught around two children. The children have brought the lunch.

Mighty Moose and the children share the lunch.

They catch lots of fish. They are friends.

Mighty Moose and the Children Go Camping

Mighty Moose is going camping.

The children are going camping and the dog is going too.

Mighty Moose and the bird put up the tent. They light a fire.

The children put up their tent. They have a fire.

The bird sees smoke from the children's campfire. The dog sees smoke too.

Mighty Moose and the children climb the hill.

"Hi!" says Mighty Moose. "Hi!" say the children. "Why don't we camp together?"

Mighty Moose and the children roast marshmellows. The dog and the bird eat marshmellows too.

Mighty Moose and the Monster

Mighty Moose is cleaning up. He has a canoe.

The children are cleaning up too.

What is that? It is the monster of the woods. The children are frightened.

No! It is only Mighty Moose. He needs help.

Everyone helps.

Mighty Moose and the children put the canoe in the water.

"Is everybody ready?"

Mighty Moose and the children are having fun.

Are they in danger?

Magical Mighty Moose

The children and Mighty Moose see the dangerous rocks and waterfall ahead.

They are frightened and try to save themselves.

Mighty Moose grabs a branch. It looks like antlers. They are close to the waterfall.

Help! The branch breaks. What is Mighty Moose going to do?

Hooray! Mighty Moose is magical. He saves the children.

He can fly.

The children and the dog are saved. They say thank you to Mighty Moose.

The children and Mighty Moose sleep. Everybody is happy that Mighty Moose is a magical moose.

Danger in the Bush

The children are showing Mighty Moose the berries they have found.

Everyone is picking berries.
The dog is helping.
Who is watching them?

The bear cub is behind Mighty Moose.
The mother is behind the children.

Everyone is frightened.
The boy has found something.

He is telling Mighty Moose to hide.
It is hunting time.

Two hunters are coming.
Mighty Moose hides.

The girl is showing them a trail.

The hunters have gone.
"Thank you," says Mighty Moose, to his friends.

Mighty Moose Plays Hockey

Mighty Moose wants to learn how to skate.

The children are playing hockey.

"Watch out."
The boy and the girl will teach Mighty Moose.

"Now I can skate," says Mighty Moose.
"Let's play hockey."

No one can score a goal.
Mighty Moose is the best goalie.
He can play on the team.

The team is getting on the bus.
Mighty Moose will ride on top.

"Stop," says Mighty Moose,
"The bridge is broken."

Mighty Moose carries the bus across.

Everybody thanks Mighty Moose.

Cross-Country Ski Adventure

Mighty Moose is skiing.
He has a present for his friends.

Now they all can go cross-country skiing.

"Put one foot in front of the other," says
Mighty Moose.

Mighty Moose and the boy are in a race.
The girl is resting.

A tree has fallen down.
The path is blocked.

Mighty Moose is lifting up the tree.

"Look out," shouts the girl, "Here I come."
She is going fast.

Hooray! She wins the race.

Mighty Moose and Snowmobile Fun

Mighty Moose is opening a crate.
What's inside?

The children are running.
They want to see.

Mighty Moose has a snowmobile.
But what is the other parcel?

"Look," says Mighty Moose, "here are some clothes for us all."

Snowmobiling is fun.

The children are off.

The boy is hurt.
But here comes the Doctor.
He is in a plane.

"I will give you a ride, Doctor," says Mighty Moose.

The boy's leg and arm are fixed.
Good-by, Doctor.

Mighty Moose Helps Santa

Mighty Moose is bringing presents.
It is Christmas.

Everyone is singing.
They are happy.

The dog is singing too.

"Look," says the bird, "someone is coming."

It's Santa Claus.

Santa is in trouble.
He asks Mighty Moose and the children to help him.

Santa can not deliver the toys.
The reindeer has a cold.

Mighty Moose helps to pull the sleigh.

The boys and the girls get their presents.

Mighty Moose would like to be Santa Claus,
but the clothes do not fit.